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LISTING OF SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please amend the paragraph on page 6, lines 15-22 of the specification as follows:

A¹ |
The synchronous container is preferably an augmented synchronous payload envelope (SPE) having a payload capacity that is sufficient to accommodate the PM information. In such cases, the first and second nodes are preferably enabled to pointer process the augmented SPE. This may be accomplished by providing an extended a-range of valid payload pointer values that can be pointer processed within each node participating in the connection.

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 14, line 20 and ending on page 15, line 11 of the specification as follows:

A² |
An augmented SPE 40' can be inserted into a synchronous container (e.g. expanded data frame 42') using conventional means, and transported through an OP-N connection mapped over any transport infrastructure in which the allowable frame length has been increased and pointer processor state machines have been adjusted to accept the increased range of allowable payload pointer values. The conventional 125 μ Sec. frame frequency can be maintained within the OP-N connection by either increasing the line bit-rate, or by adjusting the location of the augmented SPE 40" within the synchronous container to utilize available unused space within the transport overhead (TOH). For example, in the case of a concatenated STS-48c signal, the transport overhead of only the first STS-1 frame is required for routing the signal through the end-to-end path 28. Within each of the second through 48th STS-1 frames of the STS-48c signal, a concatenation indicator is inserted into the TOH to indicate that the respective frame is to be treated in an identical manner to that of the previous STS-1 frame. As a result, much of the TOH within each of the 2nd through 48th frames of an STS-48c signal

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A²

is redundant, and may therefore be utilized for accommodating an augmented SPE 40', at least while the signal is being conveyed through an OP-N connection.